JULY

Sm6

Fitness Forum

by Dick Kazmaier, Chairman
The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

Summer Cross Training

"Cross Training" may sound mysterious, but it's just an exercise technique utilizing several different types of activities to develop physical fitness. This diversity helps eliminate boredom and promotes increased strength, endurance and cardiovascular fitness. What's more, a variety of activities generally increases workout enjoyment.

An example of cross training that you might be familiar with is the triathalon. As the name implies, triathalons consist of three events—usually swimming, bicycling and running. Cycling and running primarily use the muscles of the lower body and swimming primarily uses the muscles of the upper body. However, there are a wide variety of fitness activities that you can select. And summer is a great time to get started.

With the warmer weather, outdoor rowing is an excellent choice to help strengthen a wide variety of muscle groups, particularly those of the upper body. Water, a shell and some instruction are all you need to begin. Other boating possibilities that emphasize particularly the upper body include canoeing and kayaking. The American Red Cross offers courses for both of these.

Walking, for example, uses the lower body muscles but in a different manner than bicycling or running. This is a very natural activity for most people and requires little advanced training.

Roller skating also uses lower body muscles. The smooth, gliding stride is relatively trauma free unless you are prone to falling. To receive aerobic benefits, skating must be done continuously at least 20 to 30 minutes. Coasting decreases cardiovascular benefits.

Rope jumping can be done on any level area. All you need is a rope that is right for you. To determine the proper length, stand on the center of the rope with both feet. The rope handles should reach your armpits. When you jump make sure that you have good posture; keep your head up, back straight, shoulders normal and loose, arms relaxed and elbows bent. You only need to jump high enough to clear the rope as it comes around.

Strength and endurance are also essential components for a well-rounded exercise plan. A variety of options are available. They can include:

Calisthenics that consist of a variety of exercises for the upper and lower body. Diversity here can be added by using some form of resistance; rubber bands, dumbbells, wrist and ankle weights or dynabands.

Variety in weight lifting can be accomplished by using exercise machines with different resistance options, plate weights, water, air and isokinetics; use free weights, i.e., dumbbells or barbells; or vary your weight training sets—one day can be an easy day with more repetitions and less weight and another day can be a hard day with lower repetitions and increased resistance.

Putting all this together takes some time management, planning and flexibility on your part. A week of daily activities could include bicycling, weight training, outdoor rowing, calisthenics and roller skating. With so many possibilities no two weeks need to be the same.

Take an opportunity this summer to try something different. Incorporate new exercises that you enjoy into your regular exercise routine. Remember even if you have achieved a reasonable fitness level, each time you use your muscles in a different manner there is the potential for muscle soreness. Don't let this discourage you; your body will adapt to the new activity. Challenging our bodies in new and different ways will help each of us develop to our maximum potential.

HE 20.102: